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\$180,000 IN BENEFITS: Veteran admits defrauding VA

Las Vegas man pleads guilty to theft, unlawful wearing of Purple Heart

By [DOUG MCMURDO](#)
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A Las Vegas man who lied to obtain benefits from the Veterans Administration for post-traumatic stress disorder ostensibly stemming from his service in Vietnam pleaded guilty Tuesday to theft of government funds and to a second count of unlawful wearing of a service medal, a Purple Heart, that he was never awarded.

David M. Perelman, 57, faces up to 10 years in federal prison on the first count and up to a year on the second, as well as a combined \$350,000 in fines when U.S. District Judge Kent Dawson sentences him Dec. 1.

Perelman fraudulently received more than \$180,000 in VA benefits from 1995 through 2008, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Roger Yang.

More than \$20,000 was paid to treat his diabetes; the remainder went to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, but Perelman never saw combat. He claimed he was wounded by shrapnel, but an injury to his leg was the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound incurred more than 20 years after he returned from Vietnam.

Perelman pleaded guilty to wearing the Purple Heart, awarded to members of the armed forces who are injured in battle, over a two-week period in August 2008. The charge of unlawful wearing of a service medal is connected to the Stolen Valor Act, which the 9th Circuit appeals court recently declared unconstitutional.

Dawson, however, ruled the circumstances regarding Perelman were unrelated to the facts in the 9th Circuit's case. In a rare move, the judge allowed Perelman to retain his right to appeal the constitutionality of the act. His attorney, Assistant Federal Public Defender Rene Vallarades, said he will appeal the conviction to challenge the "facial validity" of the Stolen Valor Act. Critics -- and more than one judge -- have determined the act violates free speech rights.

But Dawson found in Perelman's case that the issue transcends free speech because Perelman's lies allowed him to profit through fraudulently obtained benefits.

Perelman received the Purple Heart from the Air Force in 1994 based on the phony documents he submitted. He served roughly three months in Vietnam in 1971 as an air cargo specialist.

The VA did not find any evidence that Perelman was wounded while in the service, but the agency, citing his Purple Heart, approved his claim in 1995.

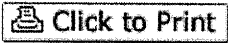
Lying to obtain a Purple Heart was not Perelman's only attempt to portray himself as a hero. In 1997 he was the subject of a criminal investigation after claiming to be a Medal of Honor winner.

That case was dismissed due to a delay in prosecution.

Contact Doug McMurdo at dmcmurdo@reviewjournal.com or 702-224-5512 or read more courts coverage at lvlegalnews.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/veteran-admits-defrauding-va-101453134.html>



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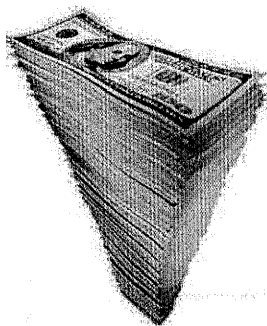
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VETERAN ADMITS TO DEFRAUDING VA OF \$180,000 IN BENEFITS

Las Vegas man, David M. Perelman, pleads guilty to theft and the unlawful wearing of a Purple Heart he did not earn.

NEWS from Larry Scott, VA Watchdog dot Org

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posted by **Larry Scott**
Founder and Editor
VA Watchdog dot Org

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[Fiesta](#) 55p · [1 week ago](#)

So uhh, here is a thought on this line. If a person puts on a robe and masquerades as a judge (up to the Supreme court level let's say) and renders a few judgments on cases, if he gets caught what would be his penalty if he gets caught? Freedom of speech? What do you think would happen if it was discovered? Thought so.

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[Kollie1](#) 34p · [1 week ago](#)

I don't like the new ruling on Stolen Valor. But I do have to agree any butthead can say whatever and although it may be a lie or inflated facts that is their right. However, to wear a Decoration you have not been awarded is in my humble main street Vet opinion theft. You've committed fraud and have stolen an honor you have not earned. It's fraud because you deceived to obtain benefit of some sort by your action. Now, phonies have and will always be out there.

I guess all that can be done is when found out they should have a nice photo and story published in the papers. Let the world know how much the want to be known. Be sure to include all their heroics.

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[shud](#) 63p · [1 week ago](#)

One of the issues that drive me up a wall is how many Vietnam wanna-na-bees gather at the Vietnam Memorial in D.C. Also, the motorcycle contingent that brings deceased vets to a cemetery or gathers at the local VFW is absolutely full of so called veterans wearing the ribbons or medals of either Vietnam vets or veterans of the two current wars. Example would be those that wear both expeditionary medals and Vietnam nam medals when being in country from 68-70. I told one you can't be wearing both.....he walked away. Also saw two of them wearing combat action badges and one was in a artillery unit and the other in a support unit not assigned to an infantry unit.

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[CK757](#) 68p · [1 week ago](#)

And how many investigations are made concerning improper denial of claims by the VA, and "Lo Ball" awards? How many investigations into why the VA takes years to process claims? How many investigations as to why the VA did not or is not implementing multiple recommendations by various "independent" panels paid for by the government". Has the VA ever been officially censured for imposing stricter requirements on veterans claims than the law calls for?

Why is the VA given a "presumption of regularity" in court, when it's obvious that the VA has been anything but? Why is the VA "subject" to administrative regulations when the regulations are in the VA's favor, and not subject to many when they are in favor of a veteran?

I believe someone who defrauds the government should be punished, just as I believe a government entity that defrauds a citizen should be punished.

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[gulskjegg](#) 39p · [1 week ago](#)

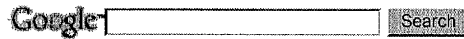
So the VA IT manager swipes \$24 MILLION but manages to walk away to a new job, an actual veteran makes an error in judgement costing the VA less than \$200,000 and faces 10 years in the slammer. Nope, no double standard here. Nothing to see, move along, move along.

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Certification

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Date: September 21, 2010

Applicant's Tracking Number: 0002089

Registration #:

Service Request #: 1-490418008

Application Date: 09-21-2010 17:44:43

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